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Director

STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

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November 19, 2010

**Item E-10: Olallie State Park Area Classification and Management Planning
(CAMP) - Requested Action**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This item asks the Commission to adopt land classifications and long-term boundaries for Olallie State Park Area which includes Olallie State Park, Twin Falls Trailhead and Mount Washington properties. This item complies with our Centennial 2013 Plan element, "Our Commitment – Stewardship" and with our core values.

SIGNIFICANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Classification and Management Planning (CAMP) Project began in December 1995; the Commission adopted a revised land classification system (WAC Chapter 352-16). At about the same time, staff sought to fulfill an agency Strategic Plan provision to prepare management plans for each park in the system. The agency's Classification and Management Planning Project (CAMP) was developed to identify preferred long park boundaries, classify lands and prepare park management plans.

The Olallie State Park Area is located in the heart of the Mountains to Sound Greenway. The Greenway stretches over 100 miles along Interstate 90 from the shores of Puget Sound in Seattle, over Snoqualmie Pass and into Central Washington. The Greenway encompasses protected and working forests, farms, historic sites, lakes, campgrounds, rivers, trails, wildlife habitat, and vibrant communities. Because of its scenic beauty and easy access to nature, the stretch of Interstate 90 within the Greenway is a designated National Scenic Byway. Regional planning efforts by the Mountain to Sound Greenway's coalition have highlighted the preservation of the visual landscape along Interstate 90 corridor and encouraged collaborative recreation planning and management among resource agencies. Olallie State Park is well situated to be a significant part of this collaborative resource and recreation management. The land base of this park is located in the foothills of the Cascades and adjoins state and federal lands which offer many backcountry recreation opportunities. The need to proceed with this CAMP was amplified by our apparent niche as the "frontcountry" recreation connection to those backcountry opportunities.

The CAMP project for Olallie State Park Area began in November of 2008. See Appendix 1 for a vicinity map describing the location of the park and the Twin Falls Trailhead and Mount Washington properties. Staff reports, public comments, and other project information have been posted on the planning web page and are available at: <http://www.parks.wa.gov/plans/Olallie/>

Public outreach was extensive. The planning team sent correspondence to park neighbors, visitors, and recreation interest groups, such as the Mountaineers, The Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, Mountain to Sound Greenway Trust and other stakeholders. Articles and announcements were published in the Issaquah Reporter and Snoqualmie Valley Record and posted at the park and trailhead bulletin boards. Staff conducted three public workshops in North Bend and two stakeholder workshops in Issaquah to solicit public input. The first workshop was held on November 25, 2008, to identify management issues to resolve and identify recreation opportunities during the planning process. The second workshop was held on April 14, 2009 to present alternatives to resolve issues identified at the previous workshop and receive public comment. Two additional workshops were held with conservation and recreation stakeholders. These workshops were held on April 1, 2010 and May 4, 2010. Focus group meetings were held with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Washington State Fire Training Academy, the Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group, the Mountain to Sound Greenway Trust, the Homestead Valley Homeowners Association, and members of the Snoqualmie Tribe during the spring and summer, 2010. The third public workshop was held on September 2, 2010 for staff to present preliminary recommendations and receive public comment. Staff also mailed over four hundred e-mails and postcards to interested parties and adjacent landowners.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Through analysis of facility needs and the existing natural and recreational resource base, staff recommends the Commission adopt land classifications and a long-term boundary for Olallie State Park as described and shown in Appendix 2.

Land Classification:

Recommended land classifications within current Olallie State Park Area include:

- *Recreation* – existing day use, administrative area and areas determined to be best suited for developed trailheads or expanded trailhead parking.
- *Natural* – landscape with mature forest stands and pristine riverine environments.
- *Heritage* – corridors encompassing pioneer highway remnants.
- *Resource Recreation* – land base suitable for diverse trail use, trail connectors and park access trailheads and scenic corridor protection.

Park Management Issues:

The issues summarized below are those that received the most attention. A draft management plan with a full list of issues and recommendations are available upon request, on the State Parks planning page <http://www.parks.wa.gov/plans/Olallie>, and at the Commission meeting.

Old Growth Forest Preservation: Olallie State Park and Twin Falls Trail exhibit many old-growth coniferous trees (>100 years) and undisturbed mature forest environments which are of statewide significance. The preservation of this natural resource is of primary importance to the future of the park. With an increased emphasis on old growth interpretation and recreational interaction, appropriate day-use facility development is needed to provide necessary public services. Improvements may include the addition of a day-use kitchen shelter, the addition of low-profile interpretive facilities and a formalized trail head.

Resource Management Collaboration and Recreation Trail Links: By working closely with other public land managers in the area; State Department of Natural Resources, the USDA Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management, there are opportunities to co-create more recreation opportunities and collaborate with resource management. Being adjacent to thousands of acres of backcountry, public lands managed by state and federal natural resource agencies opens the door for a better networking of recreation facilities (e.g. trails linkages). One of the prime attributes of our “frontcountry” recreation area is that it offers the feeling of a remote forested landscape while being close-in to major highways and populations. The proximity and potential links to backcountry recreation areas, managed by other state and federal agencies, gives Olallie State Park a special niche in the outdoor recreation spectrum. Our long-term boundary properties will facilitate this recreation link.

Olallie State Park also straddles Iron Horse State Park’s John Wayne Pioneer Trail. Inter-connecting with this popular cross-state trail system will expand the attractiveness of trails planned for development within the Olallie area. Planning for recreational trail linkages to urban and suburban trail corridors can ease parking and trailhead congestion, while providing additional trail expansion and connectivity throughout the region.

Land management collaboration in the Snoqualmie Valley has successfully knit together the visual landscape, which has long been a goal of the Mountains to Sound Greenway initiatives. Our state park properties will help connect the relatively undisturbed forested landscape of the upper Snoqualmie Pass down to the lower valley, further preserving the National Scenic Byway.

Camping: There is currently no camping within the existing Olallie State Park Area, nor is there any suitable land base or flat ground on which to construct overnight camping facilities. However, the location of this park along the Interstate 90 corridor within an hour of Seattle and the ample potential for recreation access to public recreation lands directed the plan to include a 128-acre parcel of relatively level ground which is active as the State’s outdoor Fire Training Academy. This property lies within a natural forested cirque, buffered from sound and view of the Interstate 90 freeway. The access road to the facility is a two-mile forested roadway that creates a parkway experience for travelers. Extensive areas of this training facility are paved, with power and water utilities. If abandoned for its training use, this area could provide a substantial large-scale overnight camping facility with the potential of full utilities. The nearest State Park campground is Lake Easton State Park, east of Snoqualmie Pass. This site’s prime travel location and the amount of public land involved make this a property of interest for inclusion in the long-term boundary for future development at Olallie State Park. By including this property within the long-term boundary, State Parks can explore future opportunities to provide for developed camping facilities.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

Appendix 1: Olallie State Park Area Vicinity Map & Mountain to Sound Greenway Map

Appendix 2: Descriptions of Land Classification, Conditional Uses, and Long-Term Boundary

Appendix 3: Map of Public and Private Lands within the Long-Term Boundary

Appendix 4: Map of Public Land Ownership Adjacent to Olallie Long-Term Boundary

Appendix 5: Olallie Area State Park Management Plan Draft

Appendix 6: Public Comment

AUTHORITY:

RCW 79A.05.030(1), WAC 352-16-020, and WAC 352-16-030.

REQUESTED ACTION OF COMMISSION:

That the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission:

1. Consider the data, views or arguments submitted by any person on the proposed land classifications and long-term park boundary for Olallie State Park (including Twin Falls Trailhead and Mount Washington property);
2. Adopt land classifications, conditional uses, and a long-term boundary as described in Appendix 2 and depicted in Appendix 3;
3. Authorize the director to work with interested public agencies, conservation groups and other parties on transfer of ownership or the development of management agreements for the public lands designated in the long-term boundary;
4. Affirm that long-term boundary and land classification decisions are for Commission policy direction only and should not affect private property values; be used as an indication of a property owner's willingness to sell, or be used as a basis for making state or local government regulatory, permitting, or zoning decisions on private land holdings; and,
5. Affirm that working with owners of properties within the park's long-term boundary to voluntarily protect natural resources contiguous with those on park property may achieve the desired conservation effect and avoid the need for fee acquisition of these properties. If feasible in the future, acquisition of these properties should be on a willing seller basis.

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Reviewer(s):

Randy Kline, SEPA Reference: Pursuant to WAC 197-11-704, staff prepared a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist and issued a "Determination of Non-Significance" on September 28, 2010 for the staff recommendation finding that the action proposed by Commission staff was minor and the environmental effects not significant.

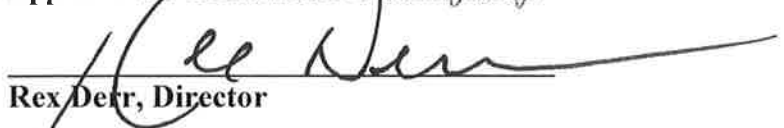
Ilene Frisch, Fiscal Impact Review: Adoption of this action has no direct fiscal impact however; it should be noted that approval of the long-term boundaries may have future fiscal impacts and will be subject to separate commission agenda items or decision packages. Approval of this action does not guarantee approval of any future requested actions and should not set that expectation.

Jim Schwartz, AAG Review: October 12, 2010

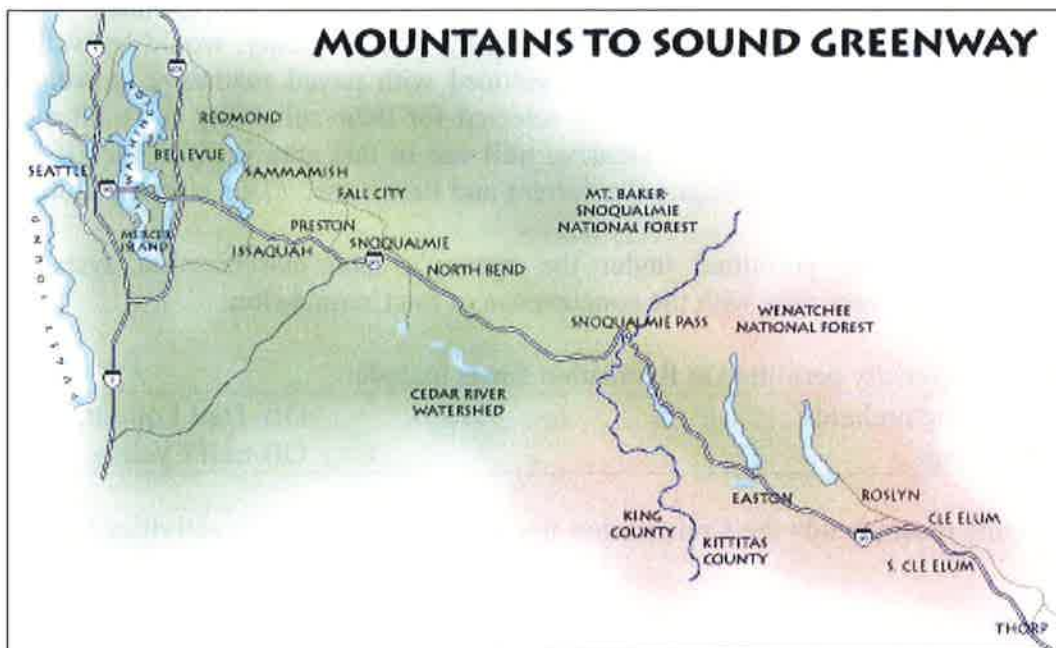
Larry Fairleigh, Parks Development Director

Judy Johnson, Deputy Director

Approved for Transmittal to Commission:


 Rex Derr, Director

APPENDIX 1 OLALLIE STATE PARK VICINITY MAP & MOUNTAIN TO SOUND GREENWAY MAP



APPENDIX 2

LAND CLASSIFICATIONS AND LONG-TERM BOUNDARY

Land Classifications:

The CAMP process uses six land classifications: (1) the Recreation classification designates areas suitable for and/or developed for high-intensity outdoor recreational use; (2) the Resource Recreation classification designates areas suitable for and/or developed for natural and/or cultural resource-based medium-intensity and low-intensity outdoor recreational use; (3) the Natural classification designates areas suitable for preservation, restoration, and interpretation of natural processes; (4) the Heritage classification designates areas suitable for preservation, restoration, and interpretation of historic properties; (5) the Natural Forest classification designates areas suitable for preservation, restoration, and interpretation of natural forest processes while providing for low-intensity outdoor recreation activities as subordinate uses; and (6) the Natural Area Preserve classification designates areas suitable for preservation of rare or vanishing flora, fauna, geological, natural historical or similar features.

For each classification there is a list of activities and facilities that are permitted, conditionally permitted, or not permitted with the classification. A conditional activity requires approval of the Commission during CAMP. An activity identified in the matrix as permitted in a classification is not obligated to be included within the park. Through analysis of future program direction, facility needs, and the existing natural and recreational resource base, staff recommends that the Commission classify Olallie State Park as a combination of Recreation, Resource Recreation, Heritage, and Natural (Refer to Map: Appendix 3).

Recreation: Areas classified as Recreation provide for high-intensity recreational activities such as overnight accommodations, camping and administrative facilities. Within the proposed long-term park boundary, the Recreation designated areas are determined to be best suited for intensive trailhead parking facilities, high-use picnic areas or formal campgrounds. The property to the north of I-90, currently used as the State Patrol Fire Academy, would be well-suited for intensive recreation and has already been developed with paved roadways, power and water facilities. Other Recreation areas have been selected for their suitability for trailhead parking, and are located near access roads. Extensive trail use in this area justifies identifying formal trailhead access areas to accommodate the current and future use. (This classification is denoted on the map in Red.)

Activities *conditionally* permitted under the agency's land classification system may be permitted at specific sites only with the concurrence of the Commission.

Activities conditionally permitted in Recreation Areas include:

Farming/orchards	Off-Trail Equestrian
Grazing	Off-trail Cycling

Of these, staff recommends the Commission not approve any of these activities at Olallie State Park.

Resource Recreation: Proposed Resource Recreation areas provide for medium to low-intensity recreational activities that are generally natural and or cultural resource based. This classification comprises the majority of the land base. A Resource Recreation “zoned” area emphasizes the natural resource base as the focus for the recreation experience and management will direct attention to the protection and stewardship of those resources while providing low-intensity recreation, such as trails and vistas. Within Olallie State Park and the proposed long-term boundary, areas recommended for Resource Recreation Areas are designated on the map in Blue.

Activities conditionally permitted in Resource Recreation areas include:

Farming/orchards	Water: Jet Skiing
Grazing	Water: Power Boating
Equestrian	Water: Skiing
Mountain Biking	Water: Wind Surfing

Of these conditional activities, staff recommends the Commission approve conditional use for Mountain Biking and Equestrian recreation, where deemed compatible with the protection of the resource.

Natural: Areas classified as Natural areas are designated for preservation, restoration and interpretation of natural processes and/or features of significant ecological, geological or paleontological values while providing for low-intensity outdoor recreation as subordinate uses. Large segments of the park around Twin Falls Trail and along the Snoqualmie River have had man-caused intrusion. It is our intent to maintain those lowland forest and riparian environments in as natural a condition as practical. The remote feeling of forest and wild-river accentuates the visitor’s experience and is valued as a destination recreation area. (This classification is denoted by the map legend color; Orange.)

Activities conditionally permitted in Natural areas include:

Interpretive Kiosks	Filming: special events
Sanitary Facilities: composting / vault	Technical Rock Climbing
Trails: paved, non motor	Water Access: hand-launch

Of these conditional activities, staff recommends the Commission approve conditional use for Interpretive Kiosks, Filming, Paved Trails (ADA), Water Access (hand-launch) where deemed compatible with the protection of the resource and where the activity or structures are relatively non-intrusive in the natural setting.

Heritage: The Heritage classification is designated for preservation, restoration and interpretation of unique or unusual archaeological, historical, scientific, and/or cultural features and traditional cultural properties which are of statewide or national significance. (This classification is denoted on the map in Yellow.)

The area in the park which deserves this recognition and protection is within the Natural Forest area described above, and has evidence of the Snoqualmie Wagon Road, the original pioneer roadway across Snoqualmie Pass. Roadway rut depressions and remnants of the boarded road surface have been located in this area. Special attention will be made to verify the location of evidence of the pioneer roadway and interpretation of this special park feature. Stewardship of this historic feature and protection from natural or recreation-caused impacts is paramount.

Note: In proximity to this historic pioneer route is a remnant segment of the historic paved state "Sunset Highway", which runs adjacent to the Homestead Valley Road near the existing picnic area. This paved highway is designated as Recreation because it is well suited for trailhead parking and does not interfere with the pioneer roadway.

Activities conditionally permitted in Heritage Areas include:

Amphitheater	Roads
Children's Play Area	Parking
Picnic Facilities	Sanitary Facilities
Equestrian Facilities	Trails: biking, equestrian
Play Fields	Metal detecting
Indoor Accommodations	Orienteering
Off-trail hiking, equestrian	

Of these conditional activities, staff recommends the Commission approve conditional use for Roads and Parking, where deemed compatible with the protection of the resource and where the activity or structures are relatively non-intrusive in the natural setting.

Long-Term Boundary: The purpose of a long-term park boundary is to take an overview of the park area and surroundings, independent of ownership that might advance the vision and goals of the park. This process not only considers whether an adjoining property would make a suitable addition, but also considers whether agency-owned property should be retained or might appropriately be considered surplus to park needs.

The long-term boundary includes properties surrounding the current ownership; properties to the northeast, west, south and southeast and southwest of the park. Eighty-four percent of the total of long-term boundaries properties are already in public ownership under the jurisdiction of USDA Forest Service (Forest Service), Bureau of Land Management, Seattle Public Utility, State Patrol, State Department of Transportation or State Department of Natural Resources. Properties to the west and northwest will provide forest buffer, natural area protection or opportunities for trail corridors connecting to existing recreation opportunities. The only areas suitable for a State Park campground are classified as Recreation and encompass the existing Washington State Fire Training Academy property. Additional properties designated as Recreation classification have been identified as suitable for additional developed trailhead facilities or needed expansion of existing trailhead facilities. Properties that would be used for low-impact recreational opportunities (especially trails) and which are also high in resource values are classified as Resource Recreation and included in long-term boundary. Properties surrounding Mount Washington and Twin Falls Trailhead to the east and south, would be utilized for their trail connections and to preserve contiguous wildlife habitat, and are classified as Resource

Recreation and Natural areas. Properties to the north of I-90 are selected to preserve the forested watershed across from Mount Washington and the potential for lowland trail corridors. Due east of Mount Washington is a parcel of private property which would provide pedestrian trail access to the summit of Mount Washington from the Homestead Valley Rd. A bootleg trail already exists through this property and is not condoned by State Parks. Appendix 4 depicts the public lands adjacent to the proposed Long-Term Boundary properties to illustrate the potential of recreation connection and collaborative resource management. Discussions with the Forest Service, Washington Department of Natural Resources and City of Seattle Public Utility supported resource management cooperation and recreation coordination to reduce management expense and enhance public recreation opportunities.

Including a privately owned property in a long-term boundary does not necessarily mean the agency wants to purchase it. It simply means that it would be in the park's best interest if the property were managed in a condition that complements development and operation of the park. Any of the following possibilities could apply.

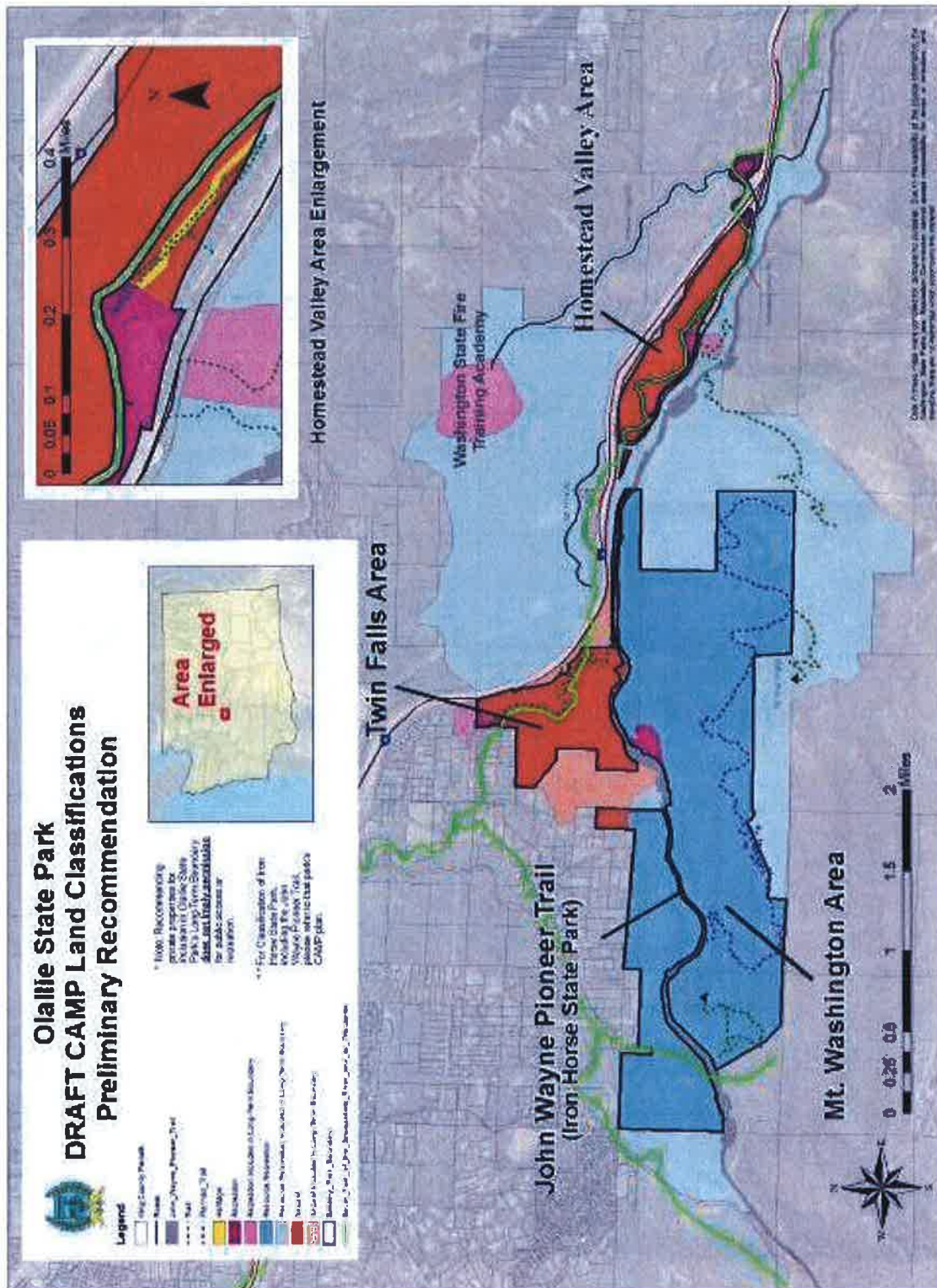
The agency might:

- Seek to formalize an agreement with an adjacent property owner to advance a shared property management goal.
- Solicit a conservation easement from an adjacent property owner to protect certain natural or cultural features.
- Readily accept a donation of all or part of a private property.
- Consider exchanging agency-owned property for a private property.
- Consider purchase of a private property in fee.

Staff recommends that the following properties be included within the park's long-term boundary:

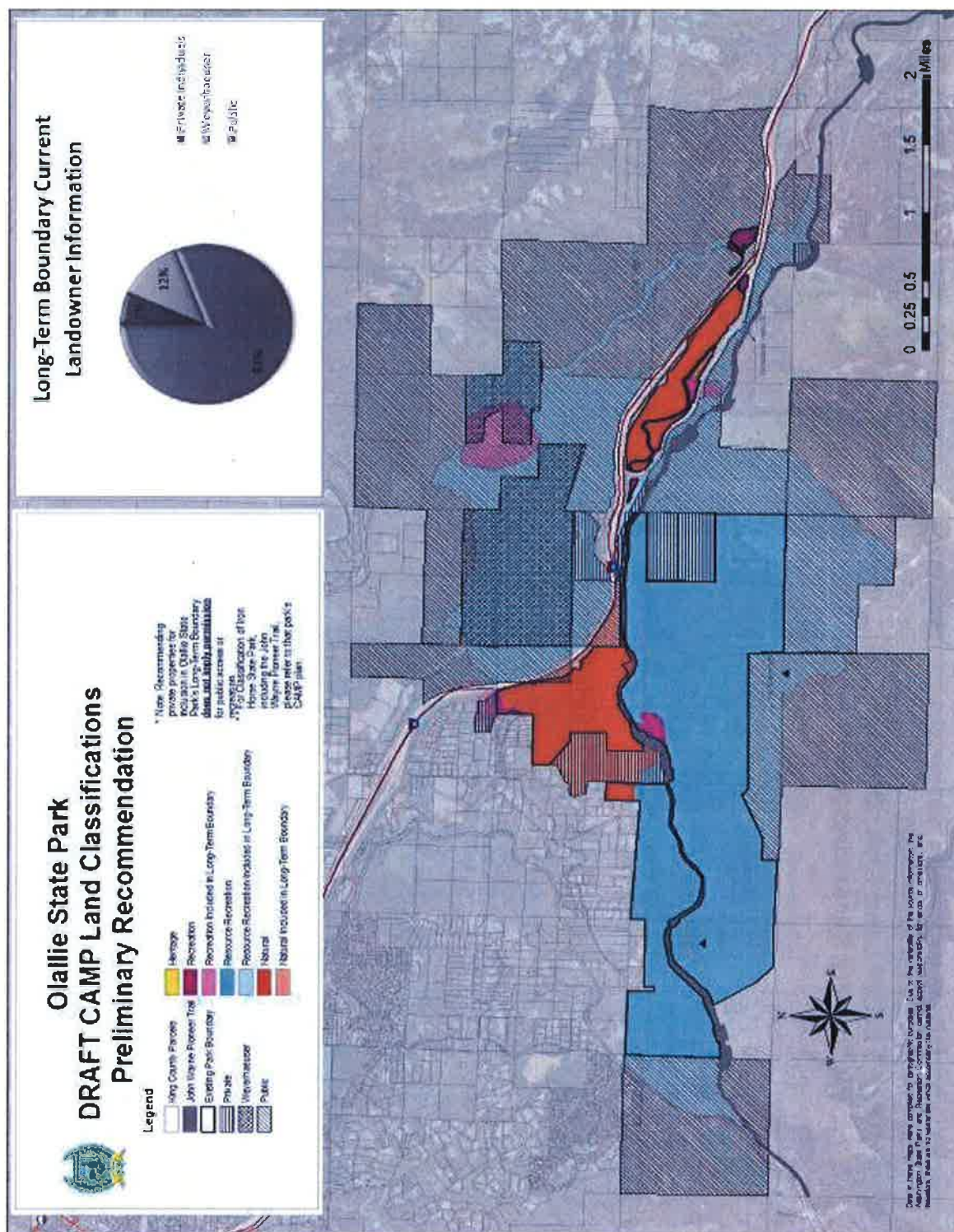
1. The Thompson property to provide legal trail access for hiking trails from public roads and connecting to the Mt. Washington Summit Trail, where there exists unauthorized user-built trails.
2. USDA Forest Service property to the south and east of Mount Washington to extend the trail opportunities and have more cohesive management of the trail near the watershed.
3. Washington State Department of Natural Resources property north of the park boundary and north of Interstate-90 including the existing State Patrol Fire Academy and surrounding forested acreage to provide a scenic visual corridor, campground development opportunity and trail corridors into other state and federal recreation properties. (Note: currently there is no indication that this property would be vacated.)
4. City of Seattle properties adjacent to the western park boundary along the Homestead Valley Road and which are not included in the city's watershed hydrographic boundary.

5. Private property to the north and east of the Twin Falls natural area for further protection of forested land and opportunity to provide additional trailhead parking near the trail entrance.
6. Weyerhaeuser property to the north of the park and adjoining the proposed DNR property for additional development of trails in that area.
7. Washington State Department of Transportation unused roadway property which is a segment of the historic state Sunset Highway and will provide significant trailhead parking. This will allow State Parks to manage uncontrolled river access, to minimize roadside sanitation problems, and it will create a contiguous State Park boundary along the roadway.
8. A BLM parcel to the North of Interstate-90 and north of the Homestead Valley Rd. to better manage the viewshed along the Greenway.



APPENDIX 4

MAP OF PUBLIC LAND OWNERSHIP ADJACENT TO OLALLIE LONG-TERM BOUNDARY



APPENDIX 5

OLALLIE STATE PARK DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Electronic version available for download at: <http://www.parks.wa.gov/plans/Olallie/>

Hard copy available on request only. Contact Nata Hurst, Washington State Parks Planning and Research Program, P.O. Box 42650, Olympia, WA 98504-2650, call (360) 902-8638, or E-mail: nata.hurst@parks.wa.gov

APPENDIX 6

PUBLIC COMMENT

Electronic version available for download at: <http://www.parks.wa.gov/plans/Olallie/>.

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